<u>Amendments to the claims</u> (this listing of claims replaces all prior versions):

1.   (previously presented) A machine-based method comprising:

analyzing a message to derive response information concerning a commercial transaction, the message comprising at least part of a message sent to a customer and a response of a customer to the message, and,

based on the derived information, automatically generating commercial transaction data in a format that is usable to automatically complete the commercial transaction,

the message and the response being entirely email-based.

2.   (original) The method of claim 1 in which the commercial transaction comprises an order for a product or service.

3.   (canceled)

4.   (original) The method of claim 1 in which the automatic completion of the commercial transaction comprises order fulfillment.

5.   (previously presented) A machine-based method comprising:

sending a message to a customer offering a product or service for sale, the message comprising locations for response by the customer indicating his intention to order the product or service,

receiving from the customer a message that includes the response, and,

based on the received message, automatically generating order information in a format usable automatically by an order fulfillment system to cause the order to be filled,

the message and the received message being entirely email-based.

6.   (previously presented) A machine-based method comprising:

analyzing a message to derive response information concerning a commercial transaction,

automatically identifying response information which requires resolution of an issue with the source of the message, and

automatically managing a message dialog with the source to resolve the issue[.], wherein the message and the message dialog are entirely email-based.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 6 in which at least some of the dialog is performed automatically.

8. (previously presented) Software guided interactive message dialogs to resolve, on behalf of a vendor, customer issues that occur in direct response messages that are automatically identified as requiring a dialog, the direct response messages and the dialogs being entirely email-based.

9. (previously presented) A machine-based method comprising

automatically sorting messages, based on response information contained in the messages, into messages that can be processed automatically to generate commercial transactions, messages in which the response information is inadequate to permit generation of commercial transactions, and messages that may be subjected to exception handling to yield information that is sufficient to generate commercial transactions,

the messages being entirely email based.

10. (previously presented) A machine-based method comprising:

analyzing a message to derive response information concerning a commercial transaction, and, in response to the message,

automatically generating a confirmatory message to the source of the message confirming that the commercial transaction has been or will be completed,

the message and the confirmatory message being entirely email based.

11. (previously presented) A machine-based method comprising:

receiving inbound messages associated with a marketing program, the inbound messages containing response information and outbound messages from which the inbound messages result being associated with a distinct piece of the marketing program, and

automatically associating the response information in each of the inbound messages with the corresponding distinct piece of the marketing program,

the inbound and outbound messages being entirely email-based.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 in which the piece comprises a marketing campaign or a marketing flight.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 11 in which the inbound message contain information that links them to the corresponding outbound messages, and the associated step uses the link information.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 further comprising automatically parsing the inbound messages for order information.

15. (previously presented) A machine-based method comprising

sending outbound messages associated with commercial transactions,

storing information related to each of the outbound messages in a database, the information being useful for completing the commercial transactions, the information not being contained in the outbound messages,

analyzing inbound messages that result from the outbound messages and that contain response information useful in completing the commercial transactions, and

automatically merging the response information with corresponding information in the database for use in completing the transactions,

the outbound and inbound messages being entirely email-based.

16. (previously presented) A machine-based method comprising

sending outbound messages associated with commercial transactions,

storing information related to each of the outbound messages in a database, the information being useful for completing the commercial transactions, the information not being contained in the outbound messages,

analyzing inbound messages that result from the outbound messages and that contain response information useful in completing the commercial transactions,

identifying inbound messages that cannot be processed automatically to generate the commercial transactions, and

using the database information to assist in exception handling of the identified inbound messages,

the inbound and outbound messages being entirely email based.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 5 in which the step of sending the message to the customer includes sending a template.

18.   (previously presented) The method of claim 5 in which the step of sending the message to the customer includes providing in-line HTML code within the message.

19.   (previously presented) The method of claim 5 also including incorporating information from a pre-existing customer account into the order information.

20.   (previously presented) The method of claim 5 also including monitoring the sending and receiving of messages using a web-based interface.

21.   (previously presented) The method of claim 5, also including:

identifying the received message as a message that cannot be processed automatically to generate order information; and

using information stored in a database to assist in exception handling of the identified message.

22.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 in which the message also includes in-line HTML code.

23.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 also including incorporating information from a pre-existing customer account into the commercial transaction data.

24.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 in which the message sent to a customer is created using a message creation tool.

25.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 in which the message is a member of a set of related messages.

26.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1 including viewing information about the messages using a web-based interface.

27.   (previously presented) The method of claim 6 in which the commercial transaction includes an order for a product or service.

28.   (previously presented) The method of claim 6 in which the message includes in-line HTML code.

29.   (previously presented) The method of claim 6 in which the message includes at least part of a message sent to a customer and responses of the customer to the message.

30.   (previously presented) The method of claim 10 in which the commercial transaction includes an order for a product or service.

31.   (previously presented) The method of claim 10 in which the message includes at least part of a message sent to a customer and responses of the customer to the message.

32.   (previously presented) The method of claim 10 in which the message includes in-line HTML code.

33.   (previously presented) The method of claim 10 in which the message includes information from a template.

34.   (previously presented) The method of claim 11 in which the outbound messages are created with a message creation tool.

35.   (previously presented) The method of claim 11 also including viewing information about the inbound and outbound messages using a web-based interface.

36.   (previously presented) The method of claim 11 also including identifying inbound messages that cannot be processed automatically to generate the commercial transactions, and

using information from a database to assist in exception handling of the identified inbound messages.

37.   (currently amended) A machine-based method comprising:

initiating a commercial transaction by sending an outbound message to a party to the transaction, the outbound message being entirely email based, the outbound message carrying elements that are configured to enable the party to complete the transaction by interaction with the elements, and

as a result of the party's interaction with the elements carried by the outbound message, electronically receiving from the party inbound information associated with completing the commercial transaction,

identifying inbound information that cannot be processed automatically to generate the commercial transactions, and

using database information to assist in exception handling of the identified information, the inbound information being entirely email based.

38.   (previously presented) The method of claim 37 in which the information is received from the party through an electronic message exchange.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 38 in which the electronic message exchange comprises email.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 37 also including completing additional steps associated with the transaction using available resources.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 37 in which the email-based message to the party includes inline logic or references to external logic.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 41 in which the inline logic or references to external logic govern a semantic and presentation structure and an interactive behavior used in completing the transaction.

43. (previously presented) The method of claim 41 in which the logic governs the presentation of information to the party.

44. (currently amended) A machine-based method comprising:

analyzing a message to derive response information concerning a commercial transaction, the message comprising at least part of a message sent to a customer and a response of a customer to the message, ~~and,~~

identifying a message that cannot be processed automatically to generate the commercial transaction,

using database information to assist in exception handling of the identified inbound messages, and

based on the derived information, automatically generating commercial transaction data in a format that is usable to automatically complete the commercial transaction,

the message being entirely email-based.

45. (currently amended) A machine-based method comprising

sending an ~~entirely email-based electronic~~ outbound message to a target party, the ~~email-based~~ outbound message relating to a potential commercial transaction between the target party and a source party, the ~~email-based~~ outbound message including at least one element that establishes a context for the target party and enables the target party to interact with the element to effect the transaction,

analyzing an inbound message that results from the outbound messages and that contains response information useful in completing the commercial transaction,

identifying that the inbound messages cannot be processed automatically to generate the commercial transactions, and

using the database information to assist in exception handling of the inbound message,

the inbound and outbound messages being entirely email based.

46. (previously presented) The method of claim 45 in which the element enables the party to complete the transaction.

47. (previously presented) The method of claim 45 in which the element comprises an active graphical device.

48. (previously presented) The method of claim 47 in which the active graphical element comprises a button.

49. (previously presented) The method of claim 45 in which the context includes credit card information associated with the target party.